



Provo City Steeling Itself for Redevelopment

PROVO, UT

The 338-acre Ironton steel plant site in Provo City, Utah, is the largest underutilized tract of land in the city. The site, which has been vacant for more than thirty years, was once an industrial powerhouse for this city of 110,000. The site's derelict condition has lowered area property values and depleted Provo's tax base by an estimated \$130,000 a year. Now, in partnership with Brigham Young University (BYU), the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), steel manufacturer USX, and EPA, Provo City has taken an active role in bringing the site back to life through assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment.

From 1923 to 1962, the site was home to a steel plant that included coke ovens, blast furnaces, and other steel production facilities. The plant was operated by Columbia Steel until just prior to World War II, when Columbia Steel became a wholly owned subsidiary of U.S. Steel (now USX). In 1962, U.S. Steel closed the facility and donated the land to BYU. In the years following, the university sold the property to several developers, including the Ironton Development Corporation, whose attempts at redevelopment were blocked by environmental liabilities associated with the property. To remove potential cleanup and redevelopment complications regarding private-sector ownership, the city purchased 58 acres of the site in 1978, and optioned 149 additional acres in 1991.

cont. →

JUST THE FACTS:

- The 338-acre Ironton steel plant site in Provo City, Utah, is the largest underutilized tract of land in the city, standing vacant for more than thirty years.
- With the Pilot's assistance, Econsulting, an organization run by Brigham Young University students, completed a study and recommended steps necessary to return the site to use.
- Cleanup of the Ironton site is now nearly finished; the city estimates that once the site is returned to active use, it will generate more than \$400,000 in annual tax revenues.

Under the Pilot's three-phase plan for the property, the former owner, USX, will clean up the site in accordance with a risk-based industrial standard agreed upon between the USX and the Utah DEQ.

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

In 1996, Provo was selected as an EPA Brownfields Assessment Pilot and awarded a \$200,000 grant. The Pilot's funding helped the city oversee USX-funded assessments on the Iron-ton site, and forged valuable partnerships with USX, BYU, and the DEQ. Under the aegis of the Pilot, Econsulting, an organization run by BYU students, completed a study of the property and recommended steps necessary to return the site to productive use. The Pilot also coordinated outreach activities to keep the surrounding community informed of the project, and developed detailed plans to manage the site during its cleanup and reuse.

The influence of the city, the Brownfields Pilot, and the other partners intent on restoring the Iron-ton site prompted USX to enter into a Voluntary Remediation Agreement under the state's voluntary cleanup law. Under the Pilot's three-phase plan for the property, USX will clean up the site in accordance with a risk-based industrial standard agreed upon between USX and the Utah DEQ. After cleanup is complete, the city will reimburse USX with funds from the property's sale once the city's development costs are met. Potential re-uses for the site include a commercial/industrial business park that could create hundreds of new jobs.

In 1999, the city purchased the 149 acres it had optioned. Cleanup of the Iron-ton site, begun in September 1998, is now nearly finished, with completion scheduled for December 1999. The city estimates that once returned to active use, the site will generate more than \$400,000 in annual tax revenues.

CONTACTS:

City of Provo
(303) 312-7074

U.S. EPA - Region 8
(303) 312-6803

Visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

PROVO